

Report to: CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 20th April 2009

Report of: Director of Chief Executive's Department

Report No:

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Report Title: *Apprentice Update*

Confidential / Non Confidential:

(Non Confidential) This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.

Purpose:

To update Committee members on the work done to increase the numbers of apprenticeship positions at Bolton Council as part of the Improving Skills and Employment opportunities strategy.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to comment on the report

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Report To The Executive 02.03.09
Employment and Skills strategy

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Background and Context

- 1.1 This report aims to update the Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Council's performance and progress regarding to the Apprentice Scheme.
- 1.2 In January 2008 it was established that Bolton Council had 37 apprenticeship positions in place. During the year 2008/9, 22 new positions have been established. A further 13 apprenticeship posts are to be confirmed. The Employment and Skills strategy was agreed at The Executive on 2nd February 09, formalising the council's approach and priorities in this area

2. Apprenticeships

- 2.1 In January 2008 an initial scoping exercise of apprenticeships found that as an organisation (excluding schools) we had 37 apprenticeship positions in place.
- 2.2 The following actions have been completed and are making a considerable impact on apprenticeships at Bolton:
 - New apprenticeship opportunities have been identified by each department. See appendix 1 for details of existing apprenticeships, new opportunities and the newly established apprenticeships.
 - The recruitment process has been amended to be user friendly for young people. Changes include simplified versions of Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Application forms and a less intimidating interview process.
 - A new salary grade has been created specifically for apprentices which reflects developmental progression.
 - External funding has been used to support the targeting of ten apprenticeships to vulnerable young people from Bolton's priority groups of Looked After Children and those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs).
 - An improved approach to the co-ordination and recruitment of apprentices has been implemented. This allows for apprenticeship numbers and quality to be monitored and improved.
- 2.3 Furthermore, a number of significant developments have been achieved which have resulted in a high quality apprenticeship scheme.
The aim of Bolton's scheme is to offer the best possible experience for apprentices by providing an enhanced wrap-around package of support.

This package of support includes:
 - An intranet and internet Gateway site that provides information and guidance.
 - A suite of training and development that is over and above the development that forms part of the apprenticeship framework i.e. Corporate Induction, Customer Care Standards, Valuing Diversity, European Computer Driving License.
 - A trained, work based mentor. The mentor supports the apprentice's acclimatisation to the work place.
 - A bi-monthly apprentice forum that offers peer support and development of generic work related skills.
 - Advice and guidance on topics such as healthy living and managing their finances.

3. TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 Ten apprenticeships have followed a process of targeted recruitment to vulnerable young people (Looked After Children and those Not in Education, Employment or Training). This has been achieved by linking with current work placement programmes.
- 3.2 Given the range and complexity of the barriers faced by many vulnerable young people, moving directly into work can be an unrealistic expectation. The range of personal, social, and educational needs, require specialised and intensive support.
- 3.3 In recognition of the additional support required to overcome some of the barriers faced by both the managers and apprentices, funding for 10 targeted apprenticeships has been provided through the Working Neighbourhood Fund. In addition, work has been done with Children's Services to provide ongoing specialist support.
- 3.4 The postcodes of apprentices have also been tracked against Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. From this tracking it can be seen that 7 of the 16 apprentices, that have been recruited and started employment, live in a neighbourhood renewal area. Thus, the scheme has had a direct impact upon the economic outcomes of Bolton's Community Strategy. A table representing the postcode spread of apprentices may be found at appendix 2.
- 3.5 The next stage of the development of skills and employability is the co-ordination of work placements provided by Bolton Council in order to further target work experience opportunities to priority groups including looked after children, NEETs, those on JSA/IB, BME groups and residents with learning difficulties and disabilities.

4. FUTURE STRATEGY

- 4.1 An Employment and Skills Strategy has been agreed at the Executive on 2nd February 2009 which articulates and positions our approach to Apprenticeships, Work Placements and Skills. Within the strategy our leadership role as an employer is clearly defined. The strategy also includes targets for skills levels and work placements.
- 4.2 The strategy contains three year plans for apprenticeships, work placements and skills development. These three year plans are attached at appendix 4.
- 4.3 An expansion of the apprenticeship scheme is to be explored through new models of delivery. This will include developing greater partnership working with public sector agencies, such as the PCT and the Hospital, to increase the number of opportunities for young people in Bolton.
- 4.4 Furthermore, the capacity of the organisation to support apprenticeships has begun to be investigated by mapping the aspirations of Bolton's young people against the employment opportunities available within the organisation. The framework for the strategy includes targeting work placements to Bolton's priority groups. Work placements can last between a week and 6 months and they provide individuals with work-relevant skills development which better prepares them to secure permanent employment. On completion the individual will be able to access a live work reference and support to apply for jobs.
- 4.5 Work placements also form part of the Education to Employment (E2E) programmes which informally act as pre-apprenticeship schemes, preparing young people who are identified as NEETs to apply for Bolton Council's apprenticeship scheme.

The Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- a) Comment on the report

Apprenticeships at Bolton Council

Appendix 1

Dept.	Apprenticeships established 2007 - 2008.	No.	Newly Established Apprenticeships 2008 - 2009	No.	Targeted Apprentice Y/N	Potential Apprentice Opportunities 2010 - 2011	No.
Adult Services	Apprentices in Health & Social Care (4) *(1in independent sector)	14 (11)*	Apprentice Civic Catering Assistant (1)	5	Y	Apprentice Museum Assistant	4
	Apprentices in Sports & Recreation (10)		Apprentices in Health and Social Care (4)		N	Apprentice in Sports & Recreation (3 – in addition to 10 pathway apprentices)	
Chief Execs	Apprentice in Business Admin	1	Apprentice Training Administrator (1)	2	N	Apprentice HR Assistant – HR Shared Service Centre.	1
			Apprentice Occupational Health Administrator (1)		Y		
Children's Services	Apprentice in Business Admin	1	Apprentice Science Technician (1)	4	N		
	Apprentice in Play work	1	Apprentice Receptionist (1)		Y		
			Apprentice HR Assistant (1)		N		
		4			Y		

	Apprentice in Early Years		Apprentice Early Start Assistant (1)				
Corporate Resources	Apprentice in Media/Printing	2	Apprentice Administrator in Customer Services (1)	2	N	Apprentice Payroll Administrator (1)	1
	Apprentice in Business Admin		Apprentice Administrator in Corporate Resources				
Environmental Services	Apprentice in Business Admin	10	Apprentice Administration Assistant (1)	5	Y	Apprentice in Horticulture (3)	5
	Apprentice in Accounts (2)		Apprentice Receptionist/Administration Assistant (1)		Y	Apprentice in Catering	
	Construction (2)						
	Construction (Electrical) (2)		Apprentice Workshop Technician (2)		Y (1)		
	Apprentice in Amenity Horticulture (2)		Apprentice Technician/Administrator Assistant (1)		Y		
	Apprentice in Animal Husbandry						

Development & Regeneratio	Apprentice in Business Admin (2)	2	Apprentice Administrator in Enterprise and Business (1)	3	Y	Apprentice Planning Assistant (1)	1
			Apprentice Administrator at Business Bolton (2)		N		
Legal and Democratic Services	Apprentice Registrar clerical officer (2)	2	Apprentice Legal and Democratic Administrator (1)	1	Y	Apprentice Marketing and Communications Assistant (1)	1
Total		37		22	10		13

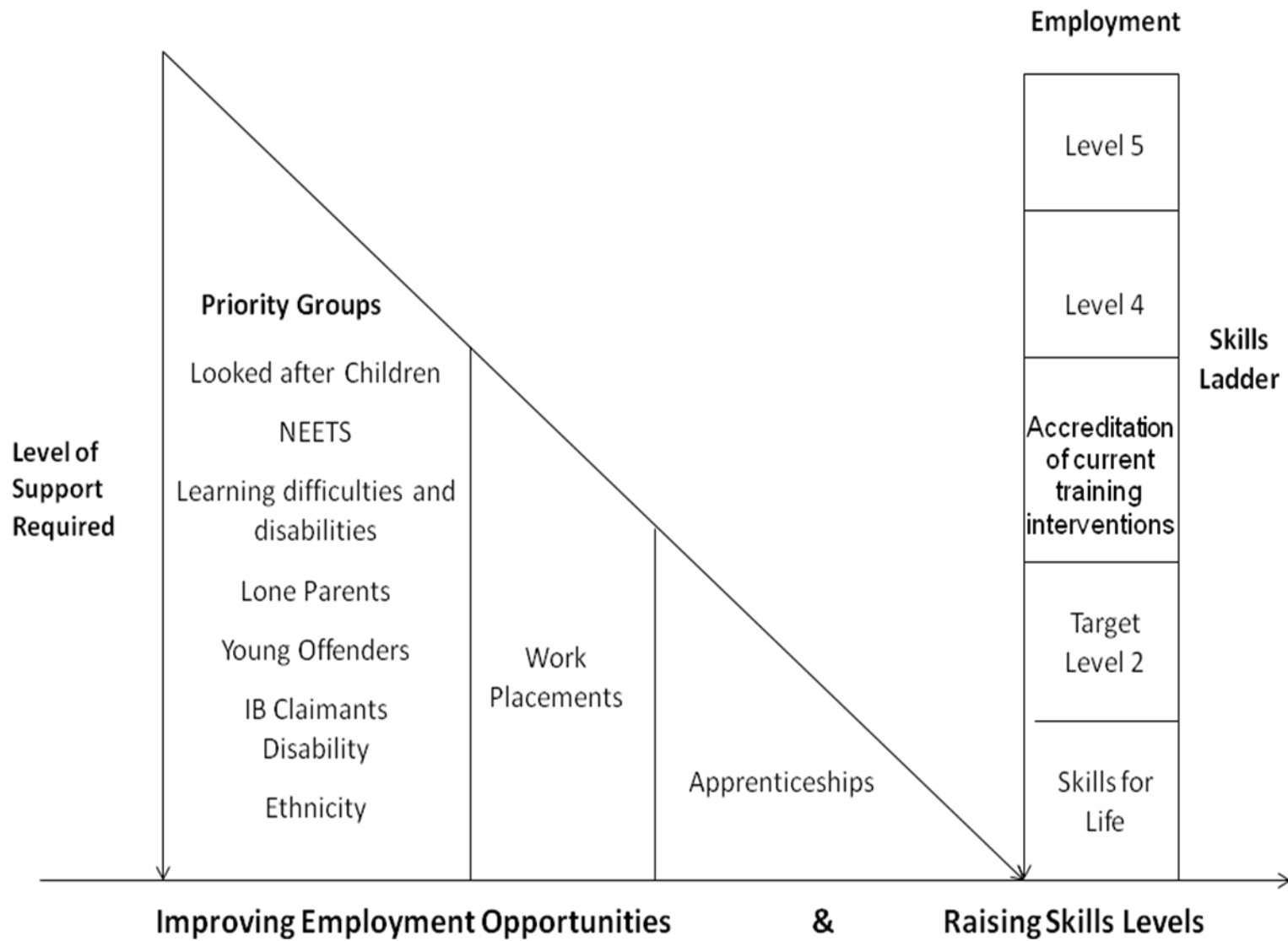
Postcode Analysis of Apprentices

Areas relating to postcodes	Number recruited 2007/2008	Number recruited 2008/2009
Astley Bridge	1	0
Blackrod	1	1
Bradshaw	2	1
Brightmet		0
Bromley Cross	3	1
Crompton		1
Daubhill	1	0
Farnworth	1	3
Great Lever	0	1
Halliwell	1	2
Heaton and Lostock	4	1
Harper Green		0
Horwich North East		1
Hulton	0	0
Kearsley	0	0
Little Lever and Darcy Lever	1	1
Rumworth		0
Smithills		0
Tonge with the Haulgh		0
Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	2	0
Westhoughton South	1	1
Total from neighbourhood renewal postcodes	3	7
Total from non-Bolton postcodes		2
Total	17*	16

N.B. Bold denotes neighbourhood renewal target areas

*Data was not tracked for 20 of 37 apprentices recruited 2007 – 2008

Appendix 3



Apprenticeships

Year 1 2008/9	What has been done? A new apprentice role established A more flexible recruitment process Workplace support Improved management information Increased the number of apprenticeship opportunities
Year 2 2009/10	What will be done? Identify new apprenticeship opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching of the aspirations of young people with the employment opportunities available within the organisation. • Work with Departmental Management Teams to identify new apprenticeship opportunities that align with Value for Money reviews and future occupational skills gaps. Target setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree set of targets for future levels of apprenticeships Training and guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided to young people to prepare them to apply for onward employment following completion of their apprenticeship. A planned recruitment campaign for school leavers
Year 3 2011/12	Where do we need to be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship scheme regarded as model of best practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence monitored of flow through of priority group young people through work placement scheme to apprenticeship scheme and on to permanent employment. • Growth of Apprenticeship Scheme to a suitable scale that represents the commitment of Bolton Council as the Lead employer in Bolton. • Contributing to workforce and diversity age targets for young people.
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Work Placements

Year 1 2008/9	What has been done? Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public commitment to Local Employment Partnership Scoping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping of placements Response to the Diploma requirements for work placements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in content design of work placements related to 14-19 Diplomas
Year 2 2009/10	What will be done? Target and priority setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of numbers of work placements that can be managed across the Council • Identification of the priority groups. • Agreement of target numbers against priority areas. Improved co-ordination and monitoring of work placements
Year 3 2010/11	Where do we need to be?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined processes embedded regarding the arrangement of placements and monitoring of the impact on onward employment. • Evidence of effectiveness of targeted work placements on improving employability prospects of individuals from priority groups. • Bolton Council seen as Employer of Choice by young people – demonstrated by increased job applications by young people. • Work experience providing positive learning support for young people to achieve 14-19 Diplomas.
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Skills

Year 1 2008/09	What has been done? Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public commitment to Employer Skills Pledge and the Get On Award Baselining current position and identifying needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills audits in Children's Services and Environmental Services Skills for life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for life strategy has been written and approved by Executive Member for HR and Diversity • Support for programme via Area Based Grant • On target for the Get On Award • Developing of Trade Union learning representatives and Joint Learning Forum
Year 2 2009/10	What will be done? Further base lining

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The skills audit will be embedded in Performance Development Reviews as of 2009 to ensure that the skills level of the whole workforce is assessed <p>Action planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop action plans to map out a staggered, year on year, approach to raising the skills levels of these departments to level 2 by 2020 <p>Skills for Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with trade union representatives to promote and encourage increased uptake of skills for life
Year 3 2010/11	<p>Where do we need to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and embedding of organisational approach to the Employer Skills Pledge decided on basis of whole organisation view of skills audit data. Accreditation of existing development to provide qualifications at levels 1 and 2. Up to 95% of workforce achieving level 2 qualification by 2020.

